

MUSIC AS A MEASURE OF POST-BELLUM CULTURAL UPLIFT

By W. J. HENDERSON.

AN editorial paragraph in this newspaper inquired plaintively the other day what had become of that great spiritual uplift which sentimental literatures had predicted would be caused by the war. The writer of this department has been puzzled about that for some time. Of course he is not supposed to know anything about anything in the world except music, and therefore has no business to make observations in the unprotected realm of human conduct. Otherwise he might be disposed to imitate that omnivorous philosopher James Huneker and devote these Sabbath morning reflections to exhibitions of vulgarity, ignorance and combativeness in public places, even those in which the divine art of music is believed to operate soothingly upon the stomachs of men and the nerves of women.

But it is not necessary for the slave of music to break the iron bars of his prison. The world of song and instrumental performance furnishes abundant evidence that the expected spiritual uplift of the war is not yet discernible, while one cannot fail to see that there has been something the opposite. Public taste has declined in a manner not only astonishing but even alarming, and public performance, which in the beginning led it, is now being put to it to keep up with the demand for rubbish. The season of music is approaching its end. It is by no means over, but no more productions of importance are promised. Recitals, chiefly by hopeful aspirants for "good notices," will constitute the material upon which the recorders will have to concentrate their analytical powers for the remainder of the season. The opera will enter upon its final week to-morrow night, and detailed consideration of that august form of delight may be postponed until next Sunday. For the moment it suffices to say that nothing of moment has been brought forward at the Metropolitan and that this institution has continued to contribute its large influence toward the lowering of the standards of public taste.

What are called in popular phrase "classical" concerts cannot be said to have done what they should have done toward elevating the art of music. Without doubt, the most beneficial musical education of the season has been offered by the large moving picture houses, which have placed before their audiences brief programmes of artistic music at each performance. The audiences are not composed of habitual concertgoers, and therefore the compositions chosen from the list of well known works are new to most of them. These audiences listen most attentively and applaud with enthusiasm. They quickly discover that good music really is good and that they like it. In the course of time a goodly proportion of them will become patrons of orchestral concerts.

The writer cannot at this moment recall a single new composition of unquestionably permanent worth produced in the season now ending. There is temptation to linger a moment over the revelation early in the fall by the Philadelphia Orchestra of "The Haunted Castle," by Michael Dworsky. The spook who haunted the castle was Michael himself, that mysterious figure in music, so long unseen and finally revealed when every one had found out who he was.

The confusion of the identity of Dworsky with Joseph Hofmann was inevitable, and then every lover of the great pianist's art felt that he had adopted the pseudonym chiefly to conceal the Mr. Hyde part of his nature. The haunted castle required all the machinery of modern orchestral music and when all had been finished the audience had listened to a series of un-musical shrieks and groans, which might fittingly have described an attack of acute indigestion.

No, that was not the long expected novelty which expressed the uplift of the war. Then came Vincent d'Indy's third symphony, "De Deo Gallico." Here we had the reflections of a logical mind upon the uprising of France. It was good music, well made, the creation of a cultivated man. Will it be heard next season? That is the test. Possibly Walter Damrosch, returning from his tour of Europe, will have a ribbon in his buttonhole and will feel more than ever under obligations to play French music. In that case we shall hear it. But will Arthur Bodanzky or Joseph Strakosky add it to his list and put it on his programme the week before Mr. Damrosch can get to it? There is reason to believe that this will not happen.

Loss of American Composer. Perhaps some of the music of the late Charles T. Griffes will be heard again. His sudden death a few days ago took out of the realm of art one of the most talented of American composers. He had labored long before he began to get the public ear, and just as he was about to reap the fruits of his struggles he was carried away. His music showed unusual invention and much technical skill in construction. We should like to hear again his "Pleasure Dome of Kubla Khan."

Also we wish to hear again John Alden Carpenter's symphony, "Sermons in Stones." This Chicago untitled business man writes music with individuality. His work has distinct quality. The symphony is one of the really serious contributions of the American composer to recent music, and it ought not to be missed for the sake of three or four seasons. It should be repeated next winter and early, while the public appetite is fresh. And the writer of this department fervently hopes that some kind of conductor will revive Mr. Carpenter's "Adventures in a Perambulator" and that the Metropolitan Opera House will adopt "The Birthday of the Infanta."

Rachmaninoff's choral symphony, "The Bells," was written in 1913, and though produced here in the present season bears no relation to war influences. It would have been profitable to pursue the list of productions brought to light. That such was the case should not astonish any who have endeavored to study musical progress as a part of the general movement of the human mind.

The one predominant ideal which has arisen above all others since the war is grossly materialistic. The thought of the world is settled upon what it gravely denominates the betterment of economic conditions. Candor, which is not always lacking among industrial workers, calls it improvement of living conditions. When you get right down to the bottom of it the demand is for less work, more leisure, larger possessions and liberal enjoyment of luxuries hitherto denied.

Operas at the Metropolitan. MONDAY—"Faust," with Miss Farrar, Messrs. Harold, Chalmers and Whitehall; Mr. Wolff conducting. WEDNESDAY—"Parsifal," with Miss Matzenauer, Messrs. Harold, Whitehall and Rotberg; Mr. Bodanzky conducting. FRIDAY—"La Juive," with Messrs. Barrientos and Perini, Messrs. Caruso and De Luca; Mr. Papi conducting. THURSDAY—"Aida," with Messrs. Musio and Clausen, Messrs. Martinelli and Amato; Mr. Moranzoni conducting. SATURDAY—"Tosca," with Miss Farrar, Messrs. La-zaro and Scotti; Mr. Moranzoni conducting. Evening: "Oberon," with Messrs. Easton and Delandino; Messrs. Kingston and Chalmers; Mr. Bodanzky conducting.



MISS PAQUITA MADRUGERA

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Concerts of the Week.

SUNDAY—Josef Lhevinne, pianist, Carnegie Hall, 3 P. M. Philip Gordon, pianist, Aeolian Hall, 3 P. M. John McCormack, Hippodrome, 8:15 P. M. Miss Clara McDowell, song recital, Carnegie Hall, 8:15 P. M. Concert, Metropolitan Opera House, 8:30 P. M. Sonata recital, Miss Elsa Chandler, piano; Miss Isabel Kauch, violin; Music School Settlement, 55 East Third street, 8:15 P. M.

MONDAY—Frederic Warren's ballad concert, Aeolian Hall, 3 P. M. Wilson Lamb, song recital, Aeolian Hall, 8:15 P. M.

TUESDAY—Schola Cantorum, Spanish music, Metropolitan Opera House, 8:15 P. M. John Corigliano, violinist, Carnegie Hall, 8:15 P. M. Pablo Casals, cellist; Mrs. Susan Metcalfe-Casals, soprano; Aeolian Hall, 3 P. M. Letta Quartet, Aeolian Hall, 8:15 P. M.

WEDNESDAY—Symphony concert, Dirk Foch, conductor, Carnegie Hall, 8:15 P. M.

THURSDAY—Miss Tilly Koenen, contralto, Aeolian Hall, 3 P. M. Louis Edgar Johns, pianist, Princess Theatre, 3 P. M. Miss Paquita Madruguera, pianist, Aeolian Hall, 8:15 P. M.

FRIDAY—Miss Maud Morgan, harpist, Aeolian Hall, 3 P. M. Miss Helen York, soprano, Carnegie Hall, 8:15 P. M.

SATURDAY—Miss Irene Schwartz, violinist; Michel Penha, cellist; Aeolian Hall, 3 P. M. Hebrew Veterans' memorial benefit concert, Carnegie Hall, 8:15 P. M.

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